

IMAGINE EXERCISE*

Ask the participants to sit back in a comfortable position and close their eyes. Read the following to them:



You are sitting alone at your kitchen table, the one that has been in your home for so many years. You have lived here in this old farmhouse since you married the boy next door. You think about how quiet the house is now. It wasn't always this way. Raising nine children was hectic, noisy and fun. You took pride in caring for your home and family. It was a woman's full time job, not like today where you are expected to have a regular job and keep a clean home, too.

Your home was always sparkling clean, but it was not easy. You woke up at dawn with your husband so you could make him breakfast. Then there were the long days of washing, ironing and cooking. The work never ended, but that was expected on a family farm. Sometimes you still wake up at dawn, and the memories of those years make you lonely and sad.

Now your dear husband has died, and the children all live far away. Not one of them wanted to work the farm, so it has become overgrown and neglected. All the farm animals are gone, the gardens filled with weeds, only a few flowers remain.

It is silly to feel anxious about the worker coming to clean. The woman was so nice from the Agency. She asked some personal questions, but she was respectful and gave you enough time to answer. She said the children are concerned, and are afraid you are not safe here alone. Sure, you can't see as well as you used to. But you know every corner of this house. You can't walk up and down the stairs very well, so sleeping on the sofa is easier. You think about the beautiful view outside of your bedroom window. You always imagined that when you die, it will be in that big bed with your family around you.

You wonder again about the worker coming to clean for you. Why doesn't she stay home and take care of her children like you did? Will she steal anything when she is cleaning? Well, you are really going to keep an eye on her. There is no way she can clean up to your standards.

You think of the hours you spent keeping the house clean and organized. The delicious meals you made, including the homemade bread you baked every Saturday for the family. You didn't have those modern conveniences that they have now. You were raised during the depression. The whole idea of having someone come in to help with the house work seems so extravagant. What will the neighbors think? But your family told you that if you don't get help, you won't be able to stay here at home. And going to a nursing home would be worse than dying.

Ask the class to open their eyes.

Ask the following questions:

1. How are you feeling?
2. What do you need from the homemaker?
3. What kinds of things can the homemaker do that will give her what she needs?

Write answers on the flip chart.

*Modify the details of the Imagine Exercise if you feel that this scenario does not represent what is familiar to the audience